

The Old Polina

Fast Waltz

(trad Newfoundland - FF Version)

9

Playing Notes: none.

Yes, the song is a Newfoundland song, but the ship's name (says Edith Fowke, Penguin Book of Canadian Folk Songs is the Polynia, launched 1861, a 472-tonner owned by Dundee Seal and Whale Fishing Company. It was commanded by Capt. William Guy from 1883 until it was lost in Davis Strait 10 July 1891, being crushed between two ice floes in a gale. Fowke got the song from Doyle (Old-Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland, 1955 ed.), and it's also mentioned in Paul Mercer's "Newfoundland Songs and Ballads in Print 1842-1974 " and Michael Taft's "A Regional Discography of Newfoundland and Labrador 1904-1972. "

The Old Polina

1. There's a noble fleet of Whalers, a sailing from Dundee
Manned by British sailors, to take them o'er the sea
On a western ocean passage, we started on the trip
And we flew along, just like a song in our gallant whaling ship.

Chorus: For the wind was on her quarter, and the engines working free
There's not another whaler, that sails the Arctic Sea
Can beat the Old Polina, you need not try me sons
For we challenged all, both great and small, from Dundee to St. John's.

2. 'Twas the second Sunday morning, just after leaving port
We met a heavy Sou'West gale that washed away our boat
It washed away our quarter deck, our stanchions just as well
And so we set the whole she-bang a-floating in the gale
[Note: some sing "a-floating off to hell"]

3. Art Jackman set his canvas, Fairweather got up steam
And Captain Guy, the darling boy, came plunging through the stream
And Mullins in the "Husky" tried to beat the blooming lot
But to beat The Old Polina was something he could not

4. There's the noble "Terra Nova", a model without doubt
The "Arctic" and "Aurora" they talk so much about
Art Jackman's model mail boat -- the terror of the sea
Tried to beat the "Old Polina" on a passage from Dundee

5. And now we're back in old St. John's, where rum is very cheap
So we'll drink a health to Captain Guy who brought us o'er the deep
A health to all our sweethearts and to our wives so fair
Not another ship could make the trip with the "Polina" I declare.